



# Allandale Neighbor

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## Lamar MS SRTS Work To Create Safer, Multimodal and “Greener” Streets

Katie Larsen

**T**he Lamar Middle School Safe Routes to School Committee (SRTS) continues to work with the City, neighborhood residents and the school community to identify and implement ways to encourage students to walk or bike to school. Most recently, the City added striping and yield signs at the intersection of White Horse Drive and

Wynona Avenue in response to SRTS members presenting concerns about the safety of the intersection due to the odd shape, excessive width, and the speed and movement of cars. The new set-up may be a short- or long-term solution, depending on the outcome of one of SRTS' current initiatives to coordinate changes to the design of, and traffic movement on, streets near Lamar Middle School with scheduled city street maintenance.

SRTS has identified street resurfacings and reconstructions as opportunities to create streets that welcome walking and cycling to and from school. The City will perform their scheduled resurfacing of Wynona in 2011 and reconstruction of White Rock in 2012. Resurfacing involves

a shallow scraping of the old asphalt and adding a new layer of asphalt. Reconstruction involves scraping all the layers of the roadway down to the dirt and then rebuilding the roadway.

At a January 11, 2011 meeting held in the Lamar MS cafeteria, residents of Allandale met with SRTS to identify the current problems and potential changes for Wynona and White Rock. An oft-cited concern with White Rock was the speed of the traffic. Solutions proposed by residents included adding roundabouts, bike lanes or speed bumps or installing a 4-way stop at the intersection with Wynona. Suggestions were also made to close White Rock, between Burnet Road and Wynona, to through traffic and to use the

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### HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

The next ANA EC Meeting is April 28, 6:30 p.m., Covenant Hall, Covenant Presbyterian Church. The meeting is open to the public.

ANA is currently seeking volunteers for Allandale's Annual 4th of July Parade and other neighborhood events. Please contact Cynthia Keohane for opportunities at [cbkeohane@prodigy.net](mailto:cbkeohane@prodigy.net).

### The Allandale Neighbor

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TREASURER Diane Swinney  
SECRETARY Karen Knight  
MEMBERS George Roman, Rob  
Robinson, Sara Sternberg,  
Dan Diener, Jason Kloc, Joi  
Chevalier, Mat Thompson  
and Laura DiCarlo

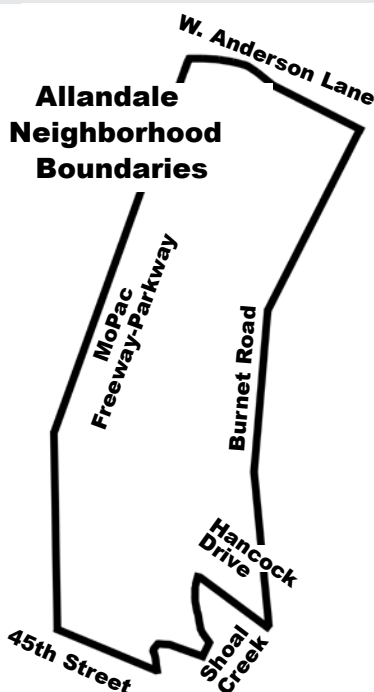
ANA General Meetings are held March and September  
on the fourth Thursday.

#### Committees

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COMMUNICATIONS Tom Linchan  
MEMBERSHIP Dan Diener  
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[Rolando.Gutierrez@ci.austin.tx.us](mailto:Rolando.Gutierrez@ci.austin.tx.us)



## ANA President's Letter

Cynthia Keohane

Allandale Neighborhood Association meets at Covenant Presbyterian Church's Fellowship and Education Building. The Executive Committee meets in room 109, the last Thursday of the month, except November and December, when it's the third Thursday. And the full Allandale Neighborhood Association meets the fourth Thursday in March and September, in Room 100.

Recently, ANA received a letter from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, advising of a "pre-application" for tax credits to build an affordable housing project on Northcross Drive. This development was to be a 244-unit apartment community, with sliding scale rents.

The EC decided to apply to qualify as a "Quantifiable Community Participant" (QCP), so that results of our specially-called meeting would be included in scoring of "pre-applications" for the Housing Tax Credit Program. Our QCP application was well-underway when the applicant's representative announced that they were not going forward with the application. Here is an excerpt from the letter I sent to a staff administrator at TDHCA:

"The ANA Board ... would like to go on record that we have considered the application. We had questions about how the development would support the needs of the low income residents. We were also concerned at the project size; 244 units would mean a large number of people needing some support. And we wanted to know how the neighborhood could raise any concerns that might arise.

If the pre-applicant decides to go ahead with the application, these are some of the questions that would have to

be answered to our satisfaction before we could support the project."

Note: I checked TDHCA's final applicants list and confirmed there is no application for Northcross.

Thanks to the many ANA members who worked at researching the application.

To all the volunteers who worked on the Northwest Park spruce-up project, huge thanks! A partial list has to include Donna Beth, Linnea, Malcolm and Peggy. Hope you'll enjoy the improved NW Park and help out on the next clean-up effort. ❖

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## Lamar MS SRTS Work To Create Safer, Multimodal and “Greener” Streets

*Continued from front page*

road space instead for student pick-up/drop-off or as a parking lot for the school and church.

Two-lane White Rock is as wide as four-lane Koenig Lane and has very few vehicles that park on the street, so there is room for a combination of changes, such as reducing the automobile lane width, dedicating space to separate bicycle facilities and removing the extra pavement to reduce impervious cover.

For Wynona, a common concern expressed to and observed by SRTS is the combination of two-way traffic, loading/unloading and parking occurring during the morning and afternoon drop-off/pick-up times, creating an unsafe environment for students walking or cycling to the front of the school. Several residents indicated their support for making Wynona a northbound only one-way street, either all the time or just during school drop-off/pick-up hours. Another proposal was to make the parking lot next to the

Lamar gym the drop-off/pick-up location to remove traffic from the street, potentially reducing the conflicts between automobiles and students walking or biking to school.

Several attendees recommended modifying the intersection of Wynona and White Horse into a “T” intersection or some other variation that changed the shape and width. The extraneous pavement on the southwest corner of the intersection could be removed during the resurfacing (instead of keeping the existing striping). The reduction in pavement would reduce the street width pedestrians and cyclists must cross, reduce impervi-



*Intersection of White Horse and Wynona in front of Lamar Middle School*

ous cover contributing to drainage issues, and will slow down the traffic.

The street redesigns are also an opportunity to create “greener” streets for addressing drainage issues, such as at the intersection of Wynona and White Horse. As defined by the City of Portland, OR, “green streets transform impervious street surfaces into landscaped green

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spaces that capture storm water runoff and let water soak into the ground as plants and soil filter pollutants. Green Streets convert storm water from a waste directed into a pipe, to a resource that replenishes groundwater supplies.”

(<http://www.portlandonline.com/bes/index.cfm?c=45379&a=209685>). The conversion of Wynona into a “green” street could have the added benefit of becoming a science learning laboratory for Lamar students to learn about the impact of development on watersheds (see an example at <http://www.watershedmg.org/green-streets/description>).

The list of ideas and issues from the meeting was submitted to the City as a “heads-up,” and a full report for the various proposals will be presented to the City of Austin staff for their preliminary review. Another meeting with neighborhood residents and the school community will be held to present the City response to the different plans and to discuss next steps.

For more information about this project, please contact Katie Larsen at [katie.a.larsen@gmail.com](mailto:katie.a.larsen@gmail.com). For more information about the Lamar Middle School SRTS program, contact Jane Herrin at [SR2SLAMAR@aol.com](mailto:SR2SLAMAR@aol.com). ❖

## Highlights from Allandale Neighborhood Association EC Meeting

*Cynthia Keohane*

**February, 2011**

**S**TRs: Rob Robinson, board liaison to the STR committee, reported on the short term rentals stakeholders’ meeting held by the COA planning staff on January 27th. City officials maintained that STRs legality is uncertain because the code doesn’t specifically bar them. Rob concluded that it may become a political issue, and we need wide support for our position from other like-minded groups such as hotel owners, B&B’s and other neighborhood associations.

**Safety:** Laura DiCarlo noted that the last newsletter included Burnet Road in the crime statistics, which resulted in a high count. She excludes these from her reports because they do not involve residences.

**Membership:** Dan Diener reported there are 247 current members. He plans to send individual renewal request letters to past members.

ANC: Sara Sternberg reported on her first meeting as our representative to Austin Neighborhoods Council. The Comprehensive Plan has entered a new phase that involves citizens in working groups. ❖

## Highlights from Allandale Neighborhood Association General Meeting

*Cynthia Keohane*


**March, 2011**

**R**obert Heil, City Planner for the City of Austin, reported on his work looking at short term rental issues, and fielded questions from the floor.

Leslie Rosenstein gave a brief Power-Point presentation about STR impacts to residential neighborhoods.

Carol Gibbs, Neighborhood Advisor for the City of Austin, described her department’s function and fielded general questions.

Dan Diener reported over 60 membership renewals in response to the recent mailing of individual renewal request letters. ❖




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# Allandale Storm Drain Improvements Project Update

Stephanie Lott, Public Information Specialist  
Senior, City of Austin

This project is designed to improve the storm drain infrastructure in the Allandale neighborhood and reduce instances of localized flooding. The bulk of the work consists of laying big, concrete pipes underneath the streets to carry storm water to Shoal Creek when it rains. Construction is roughly one fifth to one quarter done.

**Progress to Date:** Up to this point, the contractor has been working on the outfall structure, where water releases into Shoal Creek, and relocating water and wastewater lines. These lines needed to be moved to make space for the new storm drain pipes. The work on the outfall should be finished near the beginning of May, and the contractor will be able to start restoring the park to its original condition.

**Bull Creek Road:** Beginning in early April, the contractor will be laying the box culvert (a large, rectangular, concrete pipe) underneath Bull Creek Road, starting at the intersection with Shoal Creek Boulevard and heading northwards. This involves digging a very large hole in the road. Please expect a lot of loud equipment for this work. If you live on Bull Creek Road, your driveway may be blocked off for up to two days when the work is directly in front of your house. We will notify you in advance.

In addition, Texas Gas Service will begin moving its gas lines on Bull Creek Road from Shoal Creek Boulevard to White Horse Trail in early April. Like the water and wastewater lines, these lines need to be moved in order to make room



Construction work on drainage project at Bull Creek and Shoal Creek

for the new storm drain pipes. This work will involve digging up the street to access the underground gas lines.

**Bullard Drive:** Work has begun on a new outfall on Shoal Creek, roughly at the intersection of Bullard Drive and Carleen Drive. The first task now underway is moving a wastewater line. This intersection will be closed for up to four months for the work on this outfall.



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Shoal Creek Boulevard/Bull Creek Road intersection: Weekend work will continue on the intersection of Bull Creek Road and Shoal Creek Boulevard. The intersection will be closed for the weekends of April 2 and 3 and April 9 and 10. In addition, there is a possibility that we may need to close it for a fifth weekend, that of April 16 and 17. For your own safety, please observe the detour signs whether you are in a car, on a bike or on foot. The intersection is completely impassible while work is in progress.

For more information about this project, please visit the web site at [www.cityof-faustin.org/watershed/flood\\_allandale.htm](http://www.cityof-faustin.org/watershed/flood_allandale.htm). ❖

## Report to the ANA Executive Committee on Short Term Rentals

Rob Robinson

At the March 24 meeting of the ANA I gave a report on the work by the Allandale Short Term Rental Committee. Our President, Cynthia Keohane, asked me to write this brief summary of the report.

The Short Term Rentals (STRs) about which we are concerned are houses rented for just a few days or weeks at a time that are not the main residence of the owners. They are houses whose primary use is similar to that of a hotel or a bed and breakfast. We are not concerned about long-term rentals or about neighbors who rent their own homes for just a few days per year.

The Executive Committee of ANA appointed a special committee to investigate STRs late last fall. The Chair of the STR Committee is Maurice Anderson and the other members are Bill Gordon, Paulette Kern, Joe Reynolds, and Leslie Rosenstein. Cynthia Keohane is a member ex officio and Rob Robinson is the liaison to the Executive Committee.

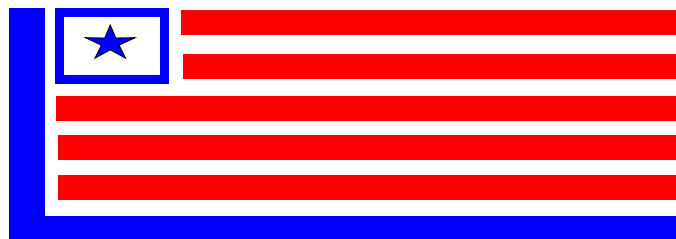
The STR Committee concluded that STRs are a significant problem in Allandale. There are two major issues. The first is safety. People living near STRs are subjected to a flow of strangers on their street and past their front doors, strangers about whom they know nothing. This is troubling to families with children and to older people, especially older people liv-

ing alone. Allandale has an active and effective Neighborhood Watch program. These strangers also undermine our Neighborhood Watch because block captains no longer know who belongs in the neighborhood and who does not.

The second issue is that STRs disrupt our sense of community. We live in a family-oriented neighborhood and most of us moved here precisely because it is a family-oriented neighborhood. Renters of STRs will never be our friends, and we do not want them to be friends with our children. We do not have parties with them, we do not celebrate holidays with them, and we cannot go to them when we need help. STRs damage the fabric of the neighborhood.

At its December 16 meeting the Executive Committee told the STR Committee to begin working actively against STRs. We contend that existing city code restricts or even forbids STRs in neighborhoods like Allandale. The STR Committee began its new task by asking city staff to enforce existing code. Unfortunately, by the end of January it had become clear that we were making little or no progress. Jumping out of chronological order here, Mr. Greg Guernsey, the head of Planning and Development Review recently issued a formal determination that Short Term Rentals are not restricted under existing City Land Use Code.

*Continued on page 8*



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## Report to the ANA Executive Committee on Short Term Rentals

*Continued from page 7*

Because we were making so little progress talking to city staff, the STR Committee decided to change tactics. We began talking directly to members of the Planning Commission, through which changes to city code usually flow. We have also been talking to City Council members and to other neighborhood associations.

We are making progress now. Many members of the Planning Commission understand that there are serious problems with STRs. Several have said they favor setting up a working group within the Planning Commission to help craft a new ordinance about STRs. We have met with four members of City Council: Laura Morrison, Chris Riley, Randi Shade, and Bill Spelman. Three of them were sympathetic to our message.

Allandale is being represented by a good team and we hope that STRs will eventually be regulated, perhaps even stringently regulated. We have a lot of work ahead of us, though, and no thoughtful person can yet say where we will end up. ❖

## Austin Neighborhood Council Update

*Sara Sternberg*

Austin Neighborhood Council (ANC) held a City Council candidate forum during the regular general meeting on March 23. Participating City Council can-

didates were asked predetermined questions by the ANC as part of their endorsement process. At the same meeting, ANC members voted to endorse candidates for each open seat. The ANC endorsements for Austin City Council are: Place 1: No Endorsement, Place 3: Kathie Tovo, and Place 4: Laura Morrison. The Allandale Neighborhood Association did not participate in the ANC vote to endorse City Council candidates due to a neighborhood by-law restriction. Austin City Council election is May 14. For more information about the ANC and to read candidate responses to an ANC questionnaire and candidate forum visit: [www.ancweb.org](http://www.ancweb.org). ❖

## Important Date in Allandale – May 7th – Garage Sale

*Donna Beth McCormick*

Again this year, Allandale will have our Garage sale. Save the date, May 7th. This is also the date of St. John's Methodist sale, so you get double the chance for shop! Hours are up to you, but for our ad purposes, they are 9 am to 2 pm.

The details for those of you that want to start cleaning out now: we will have a Google Map for those that let us know your address. You may also give a few of the items that you are selling and they will be included on the map information. We will advertise on Craig's List, other neighborhood list serves, our own URL and the newspaper.

There is no charge for this, it is a service of your Allandale Neighborhood Association, so that makes you want to join! I just might devise some note for

those that are members, have not decided!

Some deadlines to put on your calendar: April 23 – let me know if you are going to participate. That is two weeks out and to have your information in the newspaper, we need lead time. If you wait until the last minute, you may be on some of the information, but not in the paper or Craig's List.

Last year we had over 70 participating households. We may have the largest neighborhood garage sale in Austin. Linnea Lemon and I visited a lot of the sales and want to get more volunteers to help us out this year. We need to train others in the art of organizing a neighborhood garage sale, so volunteer.

Send your information to [dbmc09@gmail.com](mailto:dbmc09@gmail.com). Include: name, address, phone, email, and a short list of items, especially unusual items that will attract customers. ❖



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## Monkey Nest – Review

Laura Dooley

You've probably seen the brightly colored sign with the cute name beckoning you from the 5300 block of Burnet Road. My six-year-old daughter Kathryn wanted to know if there really was a nest of monkeys that lived in that building. I assured her that no, monkeys didn't live there, but that I was going to find out about Monkey Nest. It's a new coffee shop in the 'hood (ok, it's technically in Brentwood, but close enough to Allandale to call our own) that serves organic, fair-trade coffee in a hip and relaxed atmosphere.

I met my friend Heather there on a recent Thursday afternoon before picking up our kids at Gullett. She and I walked in and were welcomed by a modern ambience with comfortable-looking sofas, chairs, and barstools. Even though the weather is rapidly warming, I was happy to see a fireplace and imagined drinking a hot chai tea by the fire in the winter.

The place was about two-thirds full of people working on laptops (there seemed to be plenty of electrical outlets), reading books, or simply enjoying coffee with a friend. The vibe was definitely upbeat, with good music playing in the background.

As Heather and I pondered what to order, the owner of Monkey Nest, Koros Derakhshani, came over to greet us. He's a mechanical engineer by training, but for years dreamed of having his own coffee shop that was unique and original, not like the chain coffee shops seemingly springing up on every corner. For him, the opening of Monkey Nest in February was the culmination of 15 years of thinking and planning.

"We are passionate about coffee," he said. All of their coffee is organic, and he and his staff buy from local producers as much as possible, including organic tea from Zhi and pastries from Russell's Bakery. (I can attest to the yumminess of the Italian Cream Cake; \$3.73 per slice). Breakfast tacos are also served daily, courtesy of Elsi's, just up Burnet Road.

Derakhshani's emphasis on keeping things local isn't lost on his customers. Heather and I ran into a friend and fellow Gullett mom, Glenna, who raved about her coffee drink. "The caramel macchiato is much better than Starbucks. I love local places like this. When you shop in Austin, your money stays in

Austin. You're not feeding the corporate machine." Well said, Glenna.

Derakhshani clearly takes a lot of pride in Monkey Nest, both in the environment and in the food and drink offered. "We did our best to create a warm, friendly environment," he said. He emphasized that he wants all groups and types of people to feel welcome. He also wants to be involved in the community, and has agreed to be a Partner in Education for both Lamar and Gullett.

For you business-types, there's a small meeting room at Monkey Nest that you can reserve for \$25 – and get a \$25 credit toward coffee and food. The meeting room has audio/visual capabilities.

Derakhshani's son, Arash, had the misfortune of having to help me order a coffee that day. See, I've been in a chai tea rut for about a year, partly because I love the chai spices, but mostly because I've been nervous to spread my wings and try something new. So, I told him that I wanted to try a coffee drink but that I was new to



*Monkey Nest Coffee, 5350 Burnet Rd*

the coffee world. He expertly asked me a few questions, then presented me with a spiced brown sugar latte with a shot of espresso (\$3.90). It was fantastic. Heather enjoyed her skim latte (\$2.70).

That same evening at about 5:00, I decided to take Kathryn and her eight-year-old brother William to Monkey Nest for dinner. At that time of the day, there were about eight other people in the place. Most were working on laptops, and one had several textbooks spread out on his table along with a French press pot of coffee. He seemed to have a long night ahead of him. The environment seemed conducive to quiet contemplation. Unfortunately for them, my two kids were hungry and in complaining mode.

*Continued on page 10*

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## Monkey Nest – Review

*Continued from page 9*

We took a table and studied the menu. Kathryn is easy to please as long as there's some form of bread and cheese on the menu, so the "Kid's Grill Cheese" (\$3.50) was a natural choice for her. William was harder to please: he didn't see anything among the 10 sandwiches offered that suited him. I told him he had to choose something. His frustrated response was that he wanted a turkey sandwich with mayo and red onion and nothing else.

Ben and Claire, the baristas working that night, took William's request in stride and made him the sandwich he'd wished for. It came on whole wheat bread and included chips and salsa (\$6.95). I ordered a full cup of the tortilla soup (\$3.95) and found it to be perfectly spiced and delicious.

I asked Kathryn what she thought of her grilled cheese. She replied, "It's 200 percent the best." I'm not sure what that

means, but I'm pretty sure she liked it!

William was taking his own sweet time eating. When I asked him to keep at it, he told me, "The reason I'm eating slowly is that it's so good, I want to save it." And save it we did. We brought half of it home and put it in his lunchbox for the next day at school. Win-win.

Derakhshani told me, "Our business model is that we are a local company, but we create an environment where we compete with the best in the world." I'd say that Monkey Nest is off to a great start.



*William and Kathryn Dooley enjoying sandwiches at Monkey Nest*

### **Monkey Nest**

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## Northwest Recreation Center Construction Update

Lucas Massie, Northwest Recreation Center Site Supervisor

Things are going really well with the construction. I am afraid to give you an exact opening date. We will still have to obtain several permits to get our certificate of occupancy and sometimes that can hold things up. I can say that barring a disaster of some sorts we will be opening in early summer. The building will have approximately 8,000

additional square feet of space. NWRC will feature a gymnasium for youth and adult sports, a meeting room, a fitness room for aerobics and floor exercises, a room for teenage and young adult programs, a classroom for youth programs, and a multi-purpose room that can handle just about anything. The



Northwest Recreation Center remodel, April 7, 2011

building will also have a lobby that includes lounge areas, chess tables, and other small games, and the building will also be wireless so people can use their laptops in and around the center. We will know a lot more next month about the opening. ❖

## New Trees on Burnet Road

Steven Zettner

Volunteers from Allandale, Brentwood and Crestview planted 10 trees along Burnet Rd on March 13. The trees are arranged to provide shade and buffer from traffic for future sidewalks.

Six of the trees were planted at Frisco's. Frisco's staff will water the trees weekly for the next two years until they are fully established. "I think everyone on our staff loves trees and nature – we're excited to bring beauty to the grounds of our restaurant," general manager Deborah Donovan said. "Frisco's has been an integral part of the neighborhood fabric for 58 years. Sidewalk trees that make Burnet Rd feel more like the surrounding communities fits well with our way of thinking," Donovan said.

Four trees were planted at nearby bus stops. To water those trees, Sustainable Neighborhoods of North Central Austin (SN) is trying out a "Green Jug" program where jugs of water are left at the stop,

*Continued on page 12*

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## New Trees on Burnet Rd

*Continued from page 11*

and bus riders or other people can pour water on the trees and take the jugs with them to refill and return. SN is monitoring the jugs closely to see how often they get used. So far it seems like maybe one heroic person has used the jugs a couple of times in the first week. These are not heavily-frequented stops so maybe the numbers are not there for the green jugs to be the only watering source. If not, SN is hoping nearby neighbors can supplement watering the trees on evening walks.

The Burnet trees were paid for from local donations raised in 2010 for planting of trees at Lamar Middle School. Most people who donated funds for that project gave permission to use the funds for other tree projects. SN was fortunate to receive a City of Austin Urban Forestry grant for the Lamar trees. Local donations directed to pay for Lamar MS trees only are being kept in reserve to replace irrigation parts, and if not used will be returned to the donors.

SN's goal is to plant 100 trees along Burnet over the coming four years and we are 20% there. The group is in talks



*Tree Planting along Burnet Rd*

with CapMetro, Public Works, and area neighborhood associations to see about planting up to 20 trees in support of the planned MetroRapid (rapid bus) station near Burnet and Anderson. If other neighborhood-friendly businesses like Frisco's can help SN with the watering, SN will be able to plant more trees soon-er. ❖

## Meet Rob Robinson, ANA Executive Committee Member

*Tom Linehan*

### How long have you been in Austin and in Allandale?

My wife and I have lived in Allandale since we moved to Austin in 1974. We have lived on the same street, in the same house, watching the waves of time and change sweep over Austin and Allandale for 37 years. It has been wonderful! This is a great place to live!

### What made you decide to join the ANA Executive Committee?

Last year members of ANA gave me crucially important advice and help for a case that came before the Zoning and Platting Commission. Joining the EC gives me an opportunity to partially repay them and ANA.

### How long have you been involved with the neighborhood association and in what capacity?

Not long. Like so many Allandalians I did not pay much attention to ANA until I needed it.



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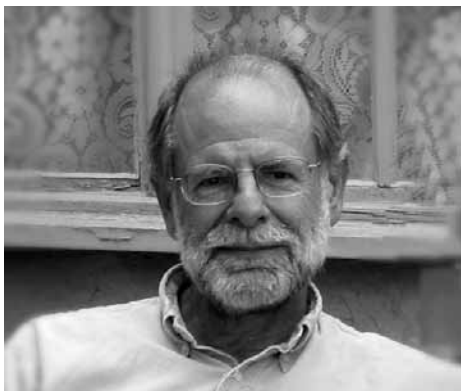
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Rob Robinson

### What one or two things do you like most about Allandale?

The neighbors! Allandale's location is convenient and my morning commute is just 20 minutes door to door. But in the end, the reason we stayed here, the thing that really counts is neighbors, neighbors, neighbors.

### If you had a good friend visit from out of town and this was their first time to Austin, where would you take them?

State Capital, Zilker Park and Barton Springs Pool, any of the many restaurants that have good Margarita's and Mexican food, watch bats, hear live music at the Long Center or Threadgill's or anything in between, boat on Lake Travis, watch or run the Austin 10K, and see, see the world's greatest pratfall comedy -- the Texas Legislature.

### What was the last CD you loaded on to your ipod/iphone?

CDs? Yes, indeed, I have heard of those things. Even used them years ago. I should probably go to Half Price Books and pick up a bunch to save and show my great grandchildren some day. Store them with my quadrant and slide rule. ❖

## July 4, 1778 – The Celebration During War

Donna Beth McCormick

Every year in Allandale we celebrate the Fourth of July with a parade – this year will be number 52 (we began in 1960). How did it start? Where did it start? In reading the American Spirit, the magazine of the Daughters of the American Revolution, I found a very good article on the history.

George Washington, in 1778, was determined to have some recognition even in the midst of war. Extra rum was given and green boughs were put in their hats. It took some years before the word got out about the celebration but by the 1780s, the Fourth of July was an event!

According to John Adams, July 2, 1776 was going to be the date, the date it was adopted, although the first delegate did not sign it until August 2. The printer of the Declaration of Independence, John Dunlap, added the date, July 4, 1776 at the top of the mast head and that sealed the date. The Declaration of Independence was such a great document that is

was read twice on July 8, 1776 in Philadelphia to great excitement in the crowds. However, Boston was the place to be in 1777 for a grand celebration for the first year with cannon firings, ships in the harbor firing a salute, speeches, parade, and more noise as the day progressed. To this day Boston seems to outdo the rest of the country, although Philadelphia is taking a close second in celebration. As the war was ending, celebrations were held in the other states down to the Carolinas. Because the United States won the war, there was hope for the future and cause for much celebration.

July 4th is a special holiday for our country. In 1976, the ships came in the harbors along the Eastern seaboard, there was a celebration at the U.S. Capitol as there is every year, a memorable service at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, and it took hours to get home because of the traffic, but it was a special year – our 200th. We are a very young country in comparison with the countries across the waters – on both sides of us – but let us hope that we continue to be a free nation, a democratic nation, a nation of acceptance and progress. ❖

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# Neighborhood Watch

Laura DiCarlo

Since January 28th when I wrote the last Neighborhood Watch article we've had just a handful of burglaries but unfortunately quite a few instances of graffiti. Graffiti appears to be on the rise in the area in general, and Brentwood has been battling it worse than Allandale I think. Just last night I noticed 2 fresh markings of "DARE" on the dumpsters in the south parking lot at Lamar MS, and the rude word scrawled on the fence at Bullard and White Rock last week was especially annoying. Folks on Bull Creek had their pop up trailer tagged last month, and there have been other incidents as well.

Thanks to Marilyn and Joe Whitlock for helping me paint over "END WAR" and "Rick Perry wuz hir" at the retention dam this past Sunday. Thanks also to ANA Parks and Green Spaces Chair Linnea Lemon for getting us the matching paint. I strongly feel a zero tolerance policy towards graffiti is critical. The steps to follow when calling in graffiti are:

1. Take pictures and make sure you can report the exact location (i.e. - closest

address, cross streets, etc.).

2. Call 311 and get a case number

3. Ask to be forwarded to police non-emergency to make a police report and get that case number as well.

4. Send your pictures to the e-mail address the operator gives you (usually central west detectives)

5. The city's abatement program will remove graffiti, and will do so quickly on road signs. However, if it's not a road sign or on private property I usually remove or paint over it myself.

6. Call or e-mail to FYI me and let me know whether you have already removed it. I have solvent if anyone wants to borrow it, and I'm happy to come do it myself if you let me know the location.

Before I give details about the burglaries of vehicles (BOV), burglaries of residences (BOR) and thefts, I'd like to explain that I don't usually mention all of the burglaries of non-residences and shop lifting that occur on Burnet Rd., Anderson Lane, etc. That's why the numbers reported in Tom Linehan's article in

the last newsletter were higher.

Yes, there are lots of incidents that occur at 2525 W. Anderson Lane and that is important to realize, but my focus is on our houses and cars while parked at home.

That being said, for the last few days of January and the month of February there were BOVs in the 6400 block of Nasco, 2600 block of Geraghty, and attempted in the 6600 block of Nasco. There was a BOR in the 5900 block of Marilyn, the 6000 block of Bullcreek, 4600 block of Finley, and 4700 block of Chiappero Trail. Thefts occurred in the 6800 block of Great Northern Blvd. and 2600 block of Hancock.

There were two BOVs in March, one of which was in the 3100 block of Carlisle and the other in the 6000 block of Lexington Rd. There was just one BOR, which was on West Park Dr. A car was supposedly stolen on Great Northern (which I am going to look into) and



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someone attempted to take a motor cycle from Foster Lane. A bicycle was stolen on Northcross, and there were several incidents on Anderson Lane that I will blip over.

Bike theft s have become a problem in Brentwood, but so far we have not seen a large number of bike thefts here in Allandale.

What does all of this mean? It means that while our incidents have been relatively low we still need YOU to help carry out Neighborhood Watch in Allandale. You can "do the 5" and keep an eye on the 5 houses right around you as well as become a block captain and help keep others on your street informed about any incidents. Please also remember to report graffiti and let me know. I will be doing a training for block captains Sunday, May 1st at 2pm with patrol training at 3pm. Please RSVP at [lhdicarlo@yahoo.com](mailto:lhdicarlo@yahoo.com) or 323-6929 if interested. ❖



## What Does It Mean To Have A Green Thumb?

*Ginger Soule'*

Success in any endeavor comes from knowing the appropriate things to do, how much and when to do it, doing the appropriate things at the right times, repeating when necessary and NOT doing things that will defeat your plan. How does this play out in organic lawn care? Here's the recipe and a year's schedule:

### WINTER:

Water occasionally when rain is insufficient. A too-dry lawn is likely to die out when hard freezes hit. Despite our City's wrong advice in our utility bills not to water in winter, it always costs more in time, money and water to replace grass than to maintain it.

### WHEN AND WHAT TO FERTILIZE WITH:

Do not fertilize too early! Our best allies in lawn care are the wonderful micro-organisms of the "soil-food-web", especially mycorrhizal fungi. These "work horses" of the soil need warm soil

to "wake up" and start work for the growing season. This usually happens about April 1. So composting or fertilizing anytime in April is good. A HEALTHY lawn may only need a 1/4 to 1/2" layer of compost in spring and a slow-release organic fertilizer in fall. Fall fertilization is best done from approx. Sept 21 to mid-Oct.

If you need to fertilize, choose an organic brand with approx. a 4-2-3 formula. These numbers (in order) stand for nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Shoal Creek Nursery carries excellent organic fertilizers. One is also available at our nearest large home improvement store. It has the formula listed above as well as horticultural molasses and Texas green sand. Molasses feeds the mycorrhizal fungi and other beneficial soil organisms and green sand provides grass with minerals and substances that chemical fertilizers do not provide, thus leading to more vigor and drought resistance.

*Continued on page 16*

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## What Does It Mean To Have A Green Thumb

*Continued from page 15*

When switching from a chemical to an organic regimen, don't get impatient if you don't see immediate dramatic results. Over time, you will find that your grass will gradually become thicker, more able to choke out weeds and less subject to drought and freeze damage.

### WHY NOT USE CHEMICAL FERTILIZERS?

First of all, they are based on incomplete information from 19th century science. In the 18 Hundreds, Justus von Liebig, a German scientist burned plant tissue and then analyzed the remaining ash. All he found was nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium and concluded that was all plants needed to live. We now know that living plant tissue and the chemistry of living things is much more complex.

Contemporary scientists have found that plant tissues contain vitamins, minerals and other elements and have identified the sources plants get them from. These other items simply are not available in chemical fertilizers. Anyone who has had to take significant steroid doses for a medical condition knows they can make you feel invincible for a time but when you taper off them, what a let-down! Chemical fertilizers cause a similar process. As their effect wears off, they leave plants or grass unsustained and less able to endure stressful weather conditions. Worse yet, because they are water soluble (organic fertilizers and compost are not) they leach into our streams and ground water. Algae bloom in our streams and drainage channels show us how much nitrogen is running off into our water ways. Don't waste your money!

Armed with this current lawn care knowledge, may you enjoy a green, weed-free safe lawn! ❖

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## Gullett Greenhouse Dedication Ceremony

*Laura DiCarlo*

Friday, March 25th the dedication ceremony for the greenhouse on the Gullett Elementary campus was held in honor of former 5th grade teacher Linda Camden. The greenhouse was originally brought from Murchison Middle School years ago by then grounds volunteer Ned Martin. Due to family health issues Mr.

Martin had to stop volunteering at Gullett several years ago and the greenhouse fell into disrepair. It was inexpensively recovered last year, but the cheap repair did not hold up in the Texas wind.

Enter retired teacher Sharon Ely who saw the need last summer when Gullett PTA Grounds Chair Laura DiCarlo put out a call for help with refurbishing the greenhouse in a sustainable fashion. Mrs. Ely saw the connection - Linda Camden had loved flowers, Gullett, her students, and there had been a fund started in her



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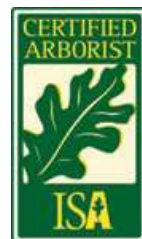
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*Gullett Greenhouse Dedication, Friday, March 25, 2011*

name after her passing just a few years after retiring. Executor of the fund Linda Lebo consulted with Mrs. Camden's family, and the decision was made.

Paige Hill of Urban Patchwork Neighborhood Farms volunteerly designed and helped with construction of the remodel with help from Gullett parents. A parent volunteer and Gullett's Sustainable Food

Center garden mentor have started seedlings that will be ready for spring planting and the April 16th Gullett plant sale that will have already occurred by the time this article is published.

The dedication ceremony, held in the warm sunshine right in front of the greenhouse with a reception for community members in the library following,

brought many from Mrs. Camden's family, including her mother and 2 sisters, to the Gullett campus. Former principals, students, and parents of students were there as well. Many noted how much Mrs. Camden had touched their lives and what a fabulous teacher she was. Mr. Camden, who had installed the plaque in his wife's honor on the greenhouse himself before the ceremony, spoke a few words about Mrs. Camden. Former principal Diane Crowe addressed the crowd of Gullett classes and community members as well, and Mrs. Camden's sister Gretchen Culbert told us how special her sister had been.

The plaque includes a picture of Mrs. Camden and a poem she wrote. The "Mr. Martin" signed that once graced the greenhouse but had fallen into disrepair, was refurbished by former librarian Ms. Bresnan and was placed above the entrance of the greenhouse for all to see at the dedication ceremony as well. Unfortunately Mr. Martin was unable to attend the dedication due to his health.

It is fitting that a teacher would be honored with a greenhouse in her name because just as a greenhouse nurtures young plants before they are ready for the big garden, Mrs. Camden worked lovingly with her students preparing them for middle school. ♦

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1000-1499	# Sold Properties	58	48	47	40	37
	Avg Sold Price	\$256,999	\$280,734	\$284,063	\$276,646	\$263,873
	Avg Days On Market	32	36	53	55	37
1500-1999	# Sold Properties	56	54	53	52	45
	Avg Sold Price	\$295,052	\$346,705	\$332,622	\$320,287	\$325,301
	Avg Days On Market	35	38	52	72	74
2000-2499	# Sold Properties	28	27	24	22	23
	Avg Sold Price	\$341,786	\$385,824	\$419,719	\$360,927	\$372,615
	Avg Days On Market	60	63	69	92	100
2500-3000	# Sold Properties	7	9	15	8	5
	Avg Sold Price	\$346,843	\$463,281	\$517,267	\$541,500	\$518,000
	Avg Days On Market	73	30	92	174	231

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## Gullett Good News

Stephanie Schulz

For Gullett students, teachers and staff, March came in like a lion! The month started off with the Gullett silent auction, raced into sports day, and flew into Spring break before tapering off and going out a bit slower. The Geckos are looking forward to more activities throughout the spring to make the school year continue to speed by.

### Making Noise at the Silent Auction

A house in the Florida Keys for a week; two action packed days and nights in San Antonio; the Austin City Limits concert of your choice; the opportunity to have Gullett Librarian Kay Gooch put your kids to bed. While seemingly priceless, these items were among several that were live-auctioned off at the annual Silent Auction on March 5. Gullett dad and returning auctioneer Joel Greenberg dared parents and friends to up the ante for these valuable prizes. (Joel's wife, Karen, was a silent auction co-chairs.)

The quieter part of the auction also attracted lots of buyers. Auction attendees quickly (and silently) bid and outbid

their friends on bracelets and baseball tickets, restaurant coupons and camps for kids, and much, much more.

"There is a lot of great stuff here this year," said one parent during the auction. "I'm especially interested in the learn-how-to-raise-chickens package."

While not everyone could win that great offer, everyone could eat chicken while at the auction. Area restaurants, including Schlotzky's, Chapala, Shipleys and more, provided sandwiches, tacos, chips, and donuts, ensuring that auction-ticket-holders did not leave hungry.

### Sun and Fun on Sports Day

Perfect weather greeted the Geckos for this year's sports days. The two-day format, which was initiated last year, saw kindergartners through second graders hitting the track on Thursday; third, fourth and fifth graders got their turn on Friday.

While the high-light may have

been Friday's snacks, the relay and running races are also always a hit.

"I ran so fast," said one first grader after completing his sprint. "I think I won!"

"Yeah, that was fun," answered his friend. "But I liked the hurdles better, and the sack race!"

According to PE teacher Pattie Brauss, increasing the event from one to two days make it easier to fit in all the games and, with the growing student population, it is virtually impossible to have all the kids participate on one day.

"I like the races, especially the relay race because you have to be fast and you

*Continued on page 20*



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## Gullett Good News

*Continued from page 19*

have to have teamwork,” said one fourth grader. “It’s fun to work, and run, with your friends,” added her friend.

“My favorite part is the hop-sack because it’s fun. I fell down once, but I usually win!” chimed in a third grader.

The fourth graders were especially lucky on the week of Sports day. They had their annual trip to the Alamo and the San Juan Missions. While the historical sites were interesting, most fourth graders agreed that the bus ride was the highlight.

When the excitement of Sports day was over, the kids – and the staff – had a week to relax over Spring break. When school reconvened on March 21, the Geckos had lots of stories about where they’d been and what they they’d seen. Students visited Disney World, Big Bend, Costa Rica, Port Aransas, New Mexico and many other fun places.

### Don’t Forget the Arts!

Our music classes are busy! Nora Jeffry will lead the second graders in “Going

BUGZ”. The show was scheduled to run late in March, but was rescheduled for late April. The Windermere Players will perform on Tuesday, April 19 for parents, and during the day for students on April 18. Ms. Jeffry will also take the fourth graders to Scarborough Fair on April 30th.

That same weekend, we will have our now-famous art show. Mark your calendars for May 6-7 and get ready to enjoy the beautiful art of our students. It’s also a great chance to meet our art teacher, Nicki Leatherwood, who joined the Gullett staff this fall.

### Greenhouse Dedication

The Gullett Grounds committee has been busy this year, and fortunate to receive several gifts and donations from the community. Linda Camden was a fifth grade teacher at Gullett. When she passed away several years ago, the school started a fund in her honor; her family graciously donated to it in order to continue the greenhouse refurbishing project. While there is still work to be done, the grounds group has already started using the green-

house and seedlings will be planted this spring. (See related story.)

correction: This column erroneously reported last issue that the funds for the kindergarten ramp have been covered. In reality, only the mulch has been purchased and we are looking for more sponsors. If you would like to contribute to this wonderful project, contact Laura DiCarlo at [lbdicarlo@yahoo.com](mailto:lbdicarlo@yahoo.com).

In addition to the quickly improving grounds and the generous donations received for those projects, Gullett has a continuous stream of revenue from its neighborhood partners:

- Hat Creek Burgers is an anytime/all-the-time partner. Hat Creek donates 3% of the ticket anytime the Geckos eat there.
- Craig O’s donates 10% to Gullett anytime you dine in or out.
- Buck Moore Feed Supply at 5237 N. Lamar donated seed potatoes to the school.
- Allandale Painters Supply (6407 Burnett) donates 10% of purchases when you mention Gullett.

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- Snap Kitchen, at the Triangle and at 6th and Lamar, donates 15% of your check on the third Tuesday of the month.

#### School vacation/unvacation reminders:

This is NO school on April 22.  
School IS school on May 30. ❖

## Dog Talk: Puppies!!! Yikes!!!

Cheryl Silver [csilver2@austin.rr.com](mailto:csilver2@austin.rr.com)

For nearly eight weeks now I have been fostering 10 Airedale puppies as well as their mother, a lovely Airedale who has been a captive in a puppy mill situation where she has been used repeatedly for breeding.

It has been about 16 years since I last voluntarily brought a puppy into my home and these 10 pups will definitely be the last. Of course they are adorable—they were just 4 days old when they came

to me—but the amount of work entailed in doing right by a pup is remarkable. (As an aside, let me add that the nearly 8-year old mother has been an angel and were it not for the case that one of my own dogs does not want this girl here, I would have adopted her in a heartbeat.)

I often hear from families that they want to adopt a puppy because: “We want the children to grow up with the puppy,” “We don’t want to adopt the problems that come with an older dog,” “We want to be able to teach the dog to do things the way we do them,” etc.

I have so much to say about this topic that I am struggling to limit my comments. But let me start by saying that just a few hours ago I received a call from someone who was ready to surrender two female littermates that are under a year of age. He could not believe how much work was entailed and the family has chil-



dren and have many commitments and once the pups were in their home they came face to face with the reality of how little time they actually had for these pups that needed a lot of time to learn the basic skills and manners that a companionable dog should have. On top of that, the two dogs had begun fighting already – not uncommon for two females-- (something I always advise people about). So, now, at under a year of age, these two

*Continued on page 23*

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## Dog Talk

*Continued from page 21*

dogs are already bouncing out of their first home. Fortunately, they are purebred dogs and there is a rescue group that will take them into their program.

In many instances, children love their dogs but like spending time with their friends even more. I do not recommend acquiring a puppy for your children---get it for yourself, if you must because you will be the one providing the care. But before you do that, make a grid with days of the week along one axis and a box for every hour of the day along the other axis. Then start filling in those boxes for when you are away at work, when you are sleeping, when you are in classes, when you are transporting your children to events, when you are gone for church, etc. Also, mark on that grid when you are

awake but totally exhausted, and then figure out how you will fit the time needed to responsibly raise a puppy on that grid. Don't forget the time for learning and practicing manners, plenty of exercise in the morning and evening, grooming, etc.

Don't forget to calculate how you will pay for the monthly preventatives, the food, the vet visits, and the emergencies including when tests are needed along with possible surgery because the puppy swallowed a Lego or part of a doll or a piece of a costume. What if the dog gets out because the children are being typically normal children and don't get the door closed and the pup is hit by a car and needs surgery for a broken leg. These things really, really happen and too often pets are surrendered because the cost of medical care is out of reach.

If you want to bring a dog into your family, I encourage you to go through the exercises I have mentioned and start

methodically making a list of issues important to you as well as concerns and raise those with a responsible rescue group. By "responsible rescue group" I mean a group that is not trying to set some record for dogs placed, but one that is committed to knowing their dogs, knowing their families, and to making a wonderful fit.

I will close now, but I hope I have given you some tools on how to make a smart move to adding or not adding a dog to your family at any given time.

Give me a call if you want to discuss dog issues. My number is 512.454.7219 ❖

## Letters to the Editor:

We'd love for readers to submit newsletter ideas, stories, and reactions to articles. [allandaleneighbor@gmail.com](mailto:allandaleneighbor@gmail.com)

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Q: What conditions can be treated with acupuncture and herbal medicine?

A: Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is a comprehensive medical system that can be used effectively in the treatment of acute or chronic disease, whether it is due to infection, trauma, or an internal imbalance. The use of TCM can preserve good health, prevent illness by keeping the body in balance, hasten recovery from or prevent advancement of illness, be used in conjunction with Western medical treatments, and treat diseases for which Western medicine currently has no effective treatment.

Q: What conditions have you had success treating?

A: I enjoy, and have had success treating: anxiety, depression, insomnia, palpitations, and stress; joint, muscle, and nerve pain; low back pain, high blood pressure, eye disorders, headaches, gastrointestinal and respiratory disorders, allergies, fatigue, PMS, geriatric issues, and symptoms of multiple sclerosis, fibromyalgia, and menopause.